



# Fact Sheet

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## The Democratic Education Plan

Senate Democrats will demonstrate their strong support for education by introducing an educational initiatives bill as one of their first ten bills in the 105th Congress. The Democrats' education proposal includes five new education initiatives proposed by President Clinton this year. Each initiative is fully paid for in the President's balanced budget plan, and each was included in, or is consistent with, the Democrats' "Families First" legislative agenda.

**A challenge to students.** Democrats propose to challenge the Nation's pupils to make a commitment to excellence. The Families First Agenda offers moderate, achievable proposals intended to foster increased security and opportunity for all Americans. As part of that agenda, Democrats are introducing an education bill that includes educational reforms that are both realistic and affordable.

**The need for affordable education.** America's youth will face an increasingly competitive job market. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 60 percent of all jobs created between now and 2005 will require education beyond high school. Unfortunately, for many families the cost of a college education is out of reach. From 1980 to 1990, the cost of attending college rose by 126 percent.

**Goals of the Democratic education initiatives.** The goals of the Democratic education initiatives are simple: to increase educational accessibility and affordability for kids who get good grades and stay off drugs, and to improve educational opportunities for our children.

Democratic Policy Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C., 20510-7050

Tom Daschle, Chairman  
Harry Reid, Co-Chairman



## ***The Five Democratic Initiatives***

- ✓ **Tuition assistance.** Democrats believe financial obstacles should not prevent students from attending college. Accordingly, they propose to provide tuition assistance for the first two years of college to deserving students. The bill provides for Hope Scholarships of \$1,500 for all students enrolled in full-time college programs, for their first year of school. Students who maintain at least a “B” average and who stay off drugs will be eligible for another \$1,500 in tuition assistance for their second year of college. The tuition assistance may be in the form of Pell grants, a refundable tax credit, or both. The \$1,500 in assistance will pay for more than the full cost of tuition at most community colleges, or provide a substantial down payment at more expensive four-year schools. Democrats believe this program will help make fourteen years of education—including at least two years of college—the standard for all Americans.
- ✓ **Tax deductions for education.** To help make post-secondary education more affordable for low and middle-income families, Democrats propose tax deductions for tuition payments. Under the Democratic plan, families will be able to choose between the Hope Scholarship program or up to \$10,000 in tax deductions for their tuition costs for the first two years of college. For the last two years of college and for graduate or professional school, up to \$10,000 in deductions will be available for families with incomes below \$100,000 per year or for individuals with incomes less than \$70,000 per year.
- ✓ **New and improved schools.** The Democrats’ school construction initiative will provide a Federal subsidy for the interest on tax-exempt bonds for new school construction or renovation of existing schools. As **Senator Moseley-Braun** stated in July, 1996, when President Clinton announced this initiative, *“America can’t compete if students can’t learn, and students can’t learn if their schools are falling down.”* The Democratic initiative is a five billion dollar, four-year program to cut the cost of borrowing for school construction and repairs by up to 50 percent.

✓ **Education technology challenge.** Democrats strongly believe that the Nation must do more to ensure that its children will be able to meet the technological challenges of the 21st century. They propose fully funding the education technology fund to help schools obtain the technological resources they need teach students the skills necessary to thrive in the Information Age. The fund will invest two billion dollars over five years as part of a Federal, State and local effort to increase technology literacy among American students.

✓ **Literacy assistance.** The fact that some American students graduate from high school unable to read is a national tragedy. To help ensure that every child in America can read by the end of the third grade, Democrats propose a program called America Reads. This program includes: 1) support for parents who want to help their children become successful readers by the end of third grade; 2) a one-on-one tutoring program to assist more than three million children in grades K-3 afterschool and during vacations; 3) greater support for Head Start so that one million more children can benefit from the program in 2002; and 4) a challenge to the private sector to support national literacy initiatives. Democrats believe this \$2.75 billion initiative is an important investment in our children's future.